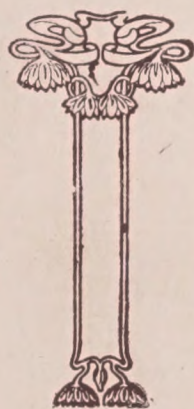


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Stories of the Catskills



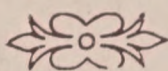
Songs and Lays

by

Wm. Benignus



An AMERICAN BOOK
by an AMERICAN POET



PRICE 50 CENTS

Copy 2

The Valley Green



A Springtime and Blossom Song

By Wm. Benignus



I wandered in May thru a valley green ---
there flowed of brooks the fleetest,
in mellow tunes of love, I ween,
the bellbirds sang their sweetest;
a jubilee which hovered long
o'er woods and wildernesses.
∴ a sunny, joyful springtime song,
that trembled with caresses. ∴

The southwind blew with sound so soft,
as if he loved to tarry,
he shook the appletree-boughs aloft
in banter kind and merry,
that to the grass like purest snow
white blossom-show'rs were trailing;
∴ and in the sky in shimm'ring row
bright silver-clouds were sailing. ∴

Still oft I hear, like far, clear chimes,
the valley's voices calling
in fervent, blending, tender rhymes,
and blossoms I see falling.
Such happiness, with life intense,
what future time can give it?
∴ Yet, tho 't is gone forever hence,
it was worth while to live it! ∴



*Neperan Brook Valley, at the foot of Pocantico Hill, Hawthorne,
New York, May 21, and May 22, 1914.*

Hundreds of American Wood Thrushes or Bellbirds, perching upon the blossoming trees, flung rapturously out their golden melodies into the sunny blue of the height.

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Song of the Fairy Flower and the Goldbirdie



COOCOO

Lulaby. — By Wm. Benignus



Out in the garden a fairy flower is blooming;
thru the open garden gate a breeze soars, child mine,
rocks the fairy flower that it rings like the tolling
of a little silver-bell, so clear and so fine:

“Coocoo, Coocoo, Coocoo my Coocoolee!
Coocoo, Coocoo, sleep, Coocoo mine!”



Flies a goldbirdie wee right in thru the open window,
perches near and looks at you with kindly eyes, my dear,
cocks its little golden head to one side so smartly,
sings like a little silver-bell, so fine and so clear:

“Coocoo, Coocoo, Coocoo my Coocoolee!
Coocoo, Coocoo, sleep, Coocoo dear!”

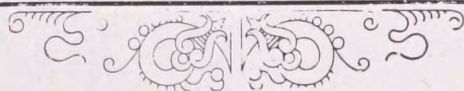


Set to music for songvoice and piano by Hermann Spielter



WM. BENIGNUS

Spring below Three Mile Camp
Shawangunk Mountains, near Ellenville, Ulster Co., N. Y., 1915



With Joyous Voice Sings a Nightingale

Morning Song, by Wm. Benignus

With joyous voice sings a nightingale:
its song floats richly away
and wakes up the echoes in glen and
dale,

and it hails the glorious day,
it hails the day, the glorious day
and the King of the Golden Rays.

A fiddler gay hears the joyous song:
he lifts his fiddle to play,
and a rich stream of melodies flows
along,

and he hails the glorious day,
he hails the day, the glorious day
and the King of the Golden Rays.



Set to music for chorus, violin and piano by Eduard Herrmann,
and for songvoice and piano by Victor Neustadt.



Stories of the Catskills

Songs and Lays

By

Wm. Benignus

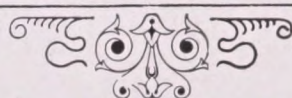
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I n d e x

	Page		Page
The Valley Green	Cover II	"Kong-quer-ree!"	18
Coocoo. Lulaby	1	Bobolink	18
Spring below Three Mile Camp	2	Yellow-throated Vireo	18
With joyous voice sings a nightingale	2	American Wood Thrush	18
Dedication	4	Song of the Starling	18
Butterfly Country	4	The Pear Tree	18
1. Sunbeam Brook	5	Two finches on a fir-tree bough	18
2. Ashokan Reservoir and Catskill		I heard a little bluebird sing	18
Aqueduct	7	The American Bluebird's Lay	19
Dreaming Soul	7	The Song of the Bubbling Brook	20
3. The Campfire	8	The Sleeping Mountain Giant	21
Then	8	Shawangunk. Storm Song	24
4. The Air of Liberty	9	The Shawangunk Mountains and	
On Gray Ledge	10	"Shawangunk Mountain Stories"	24
5. The Woodwoomly	12	The Isle of Regret	22
Children of the Light	15	The Words of the Voice	23
6. October and November	16	This life is like a theatre-play	23
The Fall Woods	16	Purple and Gold	23
American Singers. Songs and Lays	18	The Spirit Lake	Cover III
Robin Redbreast's Call	18	The Might of the Hudson	Cover IV



Notice:—Lack of funds prevented me to illustrate the stories with six fine pictures, from photographs after nature. To have six halftone plates made and to add twelve more pages to the book, would have been an additional expense of \$55.00

My "Stories of the Catskills" have appeared in the columns of the "Altoona Tribune". I thank Col. Henry W. Shoemaker for his permission to reprint them in this book under my copyright.—W. B.

Cover 2

Dedication

This little book, as a result of my direct observations and experiences, contains a few short "Stories of the Catskills". I wrote them to amuse *Sun Children* of all ages, myself included. *Sun Children* are always young and happy. Music is in their hearts, which are ever alight by the Star of Pure Joy. The souls of Sun Children are woven from sunrays. Sun Children's souls are made of the holy fire of the Life Sun, they are aglow with the love for imperishable beauty. Perennial Spring shines in their eyes with a bright light.

Lovers they are of God's golden sunshine and of God's free air, of the green hills, mountains and vales with fields of wild flowers, with woods, meadows, running brooks and shimmering lakes, and of God's wide oceans under the blue, blue sky.



I dedicate this book
to all

S u n C h i l d r e n

and specially to

My Dear Friend

Go-won-go Mohawk

the Indian Actress



Go-won-go Mohawk and her buckskin horse Bucky

"They are coming to take you from me. I hate to part with you old Pal." —*Edgewater, New Jersey, April 1919.*



Butterfly Country

- A beautiful, pearl-dotted butterfly flutters and floats in a dazzling blue sky. I see a bridge of amber span a black abyss unknown to man, and across the bridge to a castle white on a flame-red horse rides a noble Knight.

—*Wm. Benignus*

Sunbeam Brook

Story of the Catskills, No. 1

By Wm. Benignus

From its mouth in New York bay to its sources in the Adirondacks the *Hudson River* gladdens the heart, widens the mind, lifts the spirit of the voyager by the ideal vistas it presents, by its freedom and space and beauty. Every mile forms a transient panorama of mountains, lowlands, sleepy villages and cities pulsing with energy and purpose.

If you travel up the Hudson in the fine old summer time with one of the palatial *Hudson River Day Line Steamers* "Washington Irving" or "Hendrick Hudson" or "Robert Fulton" or "Albany", which glide, like white swans, majestically, smoothly and fast over the shining waterway, you enjoy to your heart's content innumerable scenic delights from the *Palisades* to the northern gate of the massive *Highlands*. In a short time then the steamer brings you to Kingston Point or Rondout Landing, the entrance gate of two of New York's most romantic Mountain chains, the *Shawangunk Mountains*, south, and the *Catskill Mountains*, north, separated by the Rondout Creek which at Rondout joins the Hudson. A train of the "Ulster and Delaware Railroad" awaits the travelers right at the pier and brings them, as it did me in late summer, 1917, to *Stony Hollow*, eight miles from Rondout.

From Stony Hollow station I walked through the ravine along the new State Road, passed an old church which stood on the right of it, then took the Morgan Hill Road, which branches off to the left. The new State Road leads farther on to West Hurley, nine miles from Rondout and 540 feet above the sea. Morgan Hill Road, a quiet mountain road, led me up a hill, through the forest, past a few pleasant looking solitary houses, amongst them, on the right, a school house, to the ten acre farm of my friend, Mr. H. K.-R. whose invitation I had followed to stay at his place a few weeks, take it easy and recuperate from my two months of strenuous work on a fruit farm near Newburgh-on-the-Hudson.

I have seen many interesting places, yet K.'s farm was a pleasant surprise

and held me spellbound. It looked like a place where poets and fairies dwell. It is a spot where the mountain breezes inspire you with a sense of strength and new life. From any vantage point, and there are many, the land revealed new wonders of hill and valley, brook and meadow, trees and rocks, mountains and sky.

Later on, making a tour of discovery, I investigated the secrets of the immense stone quarries near the farm. These quarries lay now in solitude and silence and no more reverberate from the noise and the turmoil of engines and the hustling of hundreds of workers which left them, just as they are, with giant stone piles all around telling their mute tale of once louder times. Back of the farm, surrounded by the primeval forest, one of these big stone piles rises up. From its wind-swept top a splendid view of the Catskill range, with *Overlook Mountain*, offers itself to the admiring eyes. At the foot of Overlook Mountain scintillates in the sunrays the great "Ashokan Reservoir", which supplies New York City with pure water.

Sunbeam Brook, a mountain brook, whose source is deep in the great stone quarry, flows through the farm along the edge of the woods. A large bed of Blue Iris borders the bank of the brook near the forest primeval, and hemlocks, hazels and pines reflect themselves pensively in the mirroring water. There, where the Iris flowers grow, busy hands have enlarged the bed of the brook to a broad bathing pool which looks, this *Blue Iris Pool*, for all like a dream from Japan transplanted to the region of the Catskills. There I mused and listened to the tale of the wavelets. "Do you know," they lisped and chattered merrily, "do you know, poet, we had quite some fun this summer. Who do you think was with us all the time, when the Sun King made even us cool fellows feel hot and uneasy under the showers of his scorching rays? The city folks came to us and felt better in the refreshing embrace of our lingering arms, and the tired and the sick people came

and sat in this pool for hours and hours and enjoyed our hospitality and became healthy and happy. But the grandest fun we had when a lot of jolly *Sun Children* jumped and splashed around and made the welkin ring with their glad chattering and singing and laughter.

The Sunbeams and the Sun Children danced there with us Ringelringel."

Thus sang to me the wavelets in their many moods, and while they hurried glisteningly along and bubbled and pearl-ed I heard in their silvery chorus *Alfred Lord Tennyson's* immortal song of

The Brook



I come from haunts of coot and hern,
I make a sudden sally,
and sparkle out among the fern,
to bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,
or slip between the ridges,
by twenty thorps, a little town,
and half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow
to join the brimming river,
for men may come and men may go,
but I go on forever.

I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays,
I bubble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
by many a field and fallow,
and many a fairy foreland set
with willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
to join the brimming river,
for men may come and men may go,
but I go on forever.

I wind about and in and out,
with here a blossom sailing,
and here and there a lusty trout,
and here and there a grayling.

And here and there a foamy flake
upon me, as I travel
with many a silvery waterbreak
above the golden gravel.

And draw them all along, and flow
to join the brimming river,
for men may come and men may go,
but I go on forever.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
I slide by hazel covers;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
that grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
among my skimming swallows;
I make the metted sunbeams dance
against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
in brambly wildernesses;
I linger by my shining bars;
I loiter round my cresses.

And out again I curve and flow
to join the brimming river,
for men may come and men may go,
but I go on forever.



The Ashokan Reservoir and The Catskill Aqueduct

Story of the Catskills, No. 2
By Wm. Benignus

From *Kingston, Ulster Co., N. Y.*, the quiet but busy city on the *Rondout Creek* and on the *Hudson*, a ten mile trip, west, with the auto along the new State Road, brings you, past the towns of *West Hurley* and *Woodstock*, the celebrated Artist's Colony, to the *Ashokan Reservoir* at the base of the *Catskill Mountains*.

Along the Morgan Hill Road, leading from the new State Road to K.'s farm and to the old stone quarries, there are several vantage points upon the adjoining hills, from which the shimmer of the Reservoir's waters and *Overlook Mountain*, the towering giant, standing guard, can be seen.

The great *Ashokan Reservoir*, which supplies New York City with pure water, is 610 feet above the sea. It is 12 miles long and 2 miles wide, and holds 120,000,000 gallons. Four creeks constitute its main sources of supply: The Esopus, Rondout, Schoharie and Catskill. The

total area of the entire watershed is over nine - hundred square miles, and the supply in Catskill water will exceed 800,000,000 gallons daily. About 500,000,000 gallons flow to the city every day, a distance of 120 miles thru the big main. On the way four large lakes are formed, filled with the purest water.

From its height in the mountains the conduit sinks under the rivers to a depth of 1114 feet below the sea, breaks thru the solid rock of Manhattan Island and distributes the precious water in abundance to every dwelling of New York City. The natural pressure lifts the water to the 12th story. It was necessary to bore the tunnel under the city thru solid rock to a depth of 300 to 800 feet. The cost of this great undertaking was estimated at \$162,000,000.

Commenced in 1905 and finished in 1917 this *Catskill Aqueduct* is a heroic deed of citizen's pride, of scientific genius and of sacrificing work.



Dreaming Soul

A bird is twitt'ring under leafy roof
at night upon a tree.
What keeps the little bird awake aloof,
what dream, full bright with glee?

Dear little soul, dream on, with peace
about.

Dream on. The night is long.
But when the day breaks goldenly, pour
out
your dream with jubilant song.

The Campfire

Story of the Catskills, No. 3
By Wm. Benignus

I can hardly imagine finer days than those clear ones late in August and in the beginning of September, when nature hereabouts still glories in the fulness of her strength, but already senses the time of the turning of the leaves and of the cold winds blowing from the regions of the North. On some such days, on K.'s farm I arose with the sun, and before the sleepers in the house stirred I wended my way to the brook and crossed it above the spot where the water, in a miniature crystal fall, tumbles down the rocks. On the little hill where the forest begins, I picked up dry sticks and started a comfortable fire, a camp-fire, to chase the chill away and warm up.

The sky overhead brightened up with a message of promise and hope. The atmosphere pulsed with energy from the refreshing aromatic breath of the young morning. The dewdrops twinkled on the edges of the leaves and the tips of the grasses, and their glittering diamond and opal-pearls formed most beautiful designs of fairy-filligree on the cobwebs which the tireless spiders, to catch unwary flies and other insects, had woven with inborn art on stems of weeds and on twigs of bushes in the still hours of the moonlit night.

Deep in the woods a cowbell tinkled. The melodious sounds floated nearer and nearer. They came from the bell on the strap around Rosie's ample neck. Rosie is the sleek-skinned black and white cow of the farm. Rosie spends the nights in the woods. In the summertime she prefers their coolness to the warm stable.

Soon Rosie made her appearance, looking at me friendlylike with her big shining eyes. Without fear she put her moist round blackish nose to the fire as if she wanted to investigate the mysterious bright flames. Then she raised her head with the fine horns and sent out a plaintive Mooh-ooohoo! Her cow-thoughts were probably running like this: "Milk me! It's time! Get up, you lazy folks! Milk me! It's time! So I can go to the meadow and the woods again to feed, to eat! Mooh-ooohoo!" Whereupon she leisurely and with sure, measured steps started to go down the bank of the brook, crossed the water, went up to the barn and waited there for Moa, the farmer's wife, to come and relieve her of her load of sweet, rich, nourishing milk. Rosie gave, on the average, 12 to 14 quarts of milk every day.

Up towards the road I heard now the voices of the Sun Children, as I call the good folks on the farm. The Sun in the East climbed higher. A new day of beauty, wonders and healthsome exercise and work had begun, profusely scattering opportunities of golden fortunes and rainbow-joys for all who cared and had the power of will and the strength of pure desire to grasp them firmly, to hold them fast and to use them kindly and wisely. The Spirits of Earth, Water, Air and Light, resplendent Genii, soared on shimmering wings and sang in a chorus of harmony and unity their angelic hymn of life and creation evernew and everlasting.



Then

I like to have a little house
amongst the green, right near a brook,
where no more ravens of care arouse,
but bird-songs in this quiet nook
and forest-whispers sooth. How fair
this world were with such blessings rare!

The Air of Liberty

Story of the Catskills, No. 4
By Wm. Benignus

In my younger days I heard and read so much about *the United States of North America*, that a longing seized me, which grew stronger and stronger, to see and study by personal experience this great and wonderful country and its free people. I carried out my project. The more I saw of this country, the more I liked it, and I began to love its beauty and its grandeur and the spirit of its people so much, that, in October, 1894, I took out my second papers in the Superior Court of New York City and am since then a citizen of the U. S.

When I came to this country, 1882, I landed at Castle Garden, in New York, and soon went west. I learned the barber trade in Chicago and worked at this 2 years. In 1884 I quit and started at once on my pilgrimage. My heart ached for the West, for the lure of the open trail. Four years, from 1884 to 1888, I travelled steadily, a lone voyager, thru this wonderland of my desire. To make 30 to 40 miles a day on foot, was, at that time, noways much of a hardship for an athletic young fellow like me. Sometimes walking, often beating trains, I made my way, under many hardships and privations, from New York to San Francisco, from Milwaukee to New Orleans and Jacksonville, and up north again to Washington, Baltimore and Philadelphia, concluding my roundtrip in New York. Of course, I did not always let my hands rest idle during my journey. So I worked one whole summer as farmhand, two miles south of Milwaukee, Wisc., and at similar jobs. One summer I worked as hoister and tapper in Best Brewery's Bottling Department in Milwaukee. Then I went to Western Wisconsin and helped the farmers bring in their harvest of wheat, oats and corn and assisted on the threshing machine. After that was done I went to Chicago and worked as kitchenman in a big hotel.

I paid my fare to Saint Louis and rode as far into Oklahoma as my money reached. Oklahoma was in 1884 still a Territory and its broad acres, its rivers and its woodlands, rich in game, were

still owned by their rightful owners, the Indians. In Oklahoma, I found a job as sectionhand on the Saint Louis & San Francisco R. R. at Mingo Station, where Mr. William Sweeney, an American of Irish descent, was section boss. I worked there a month, then quit, turned back and rode to Kansas City, where I again worked as barber in a little shop near Union Station, below the bluff and close to the Mississippi. My boss was an educated, gentlemanly elderly mulatto. When I left this job I started immediately on my big journey of several thousand miles thru the United States.

From Kansas City, ever heeding *the beckoning Sun* that sank evening after evening as a glowing golden ball behind the horizon of *the luring West*, I followed the shining steel track of the Union Pacific R. R. and walked, mostly making 30 to 35 miles a day and often as my daily meal only some crackers or a few pieces of wheat bread, thru the prairies of the State of Kansas to Denver, Colo., came to Cheyenne, then to Ogden, passed, on foot, the northern marshland of the Great Salt Lake, beat my way on freight trains thru the State of Wyoming and 100 miles across the vast Nevada Desert, crossed the Rocky Mountains, came to Sacramento and then arrived, weather-beaten, but hale and sound, in San Francisco, the Queen City of the Pacific at the Golden Gate.

In San Francisco I worked one month, taking care of two horses. Then I quit and struck out for Los Angeles, passed, in beating the Southern Pacific Railroad riding on the rods and breakbeams under the cars, the great deserts of Arizona and New Mexico, came thru Texas and arrived, late in the fall, in Saint Louis, Mo. In Saint Louis I settled down for the winter. That winter was one of the hardest I ever went thru. I earned my living as coal carrier. To handle the big, heavy lumps of soft coal is not exactly fun. It was the winter when the Mississippi froze so solid that you could walk across the ice from the Levee to East Saint Louis. By the way, I often beat my way from New York City to

Philadelphia, Harrisburg, Altoona, Fort Wayne and Chicago. It generally took me two weeks. So the return trip. Up the *Horse Shoe Curve*, near Altoona, Pa., I walked up the mountain along the steel tracks of the Pennsylvania R.R. or rode the bumpers on the cars, just as the opportunity offered itself. Snuggled right into the bend of the big Horse-shoe, right into the mountain's arms, shimmers the headwater of the *Juniata River*. There the underground waters from the enclosing mountain, giving the *Juniata* its origin, collect and form the reservoir which supplies the *City of Altoona* with drinking water. Having passed thru the steam-hot tunnel on top of *Bald Eagle Mountain* and arrived in the beautiful valley at the mountain's base, I sometimes stopped there for a while and visited a good farmer who had many bee-hives. For doing a little wood-chopping he regaled the traveler with a square meal and delicious honey.

On these my explorations and wanderings time flew and vanished. Week days or Sundays were all one to me. Dates I knew not. I merely *lived* in a care-free joy "*to be alive*". I absorbed in my soul wonder after wonder of this grand country, "*God's Country*", the U. S. — The "*Air of Liberty*" welled around me, caressed me, pulsed in my veins, streamed thru me, electrified me, filled my being. Of this exstacy of youth and existence my illustrated poetical work about select American Landscapes "*Stimmen der Wasser*" — "*Voices of the Waters*", bears witness. This book, and each of my other books, is *my tribute and expression of gratefulness to the souls who have been kind to me on my earthly pilgrimage*. And in return for their kindness I give to these good souls my books as the spiritual gift of my own soul, of my self; for all that, I give them also to those who have *not* been kind to me, and give them to all who care to read books that ring true.

The "*Air of Liberty*"! I recall one memorable incident. One fair summer day, as I wandered thru Kansas, I stopped on the outskirts of a village where a willow-bordered creek flowed thru the prairie. There, tired from the walk along the railroad track, I sat on the beams of a solitary watertank built close by the track of the Union Pacific R. R. No human being was near. The air was still, but felt as if charged with electric energy. This *Prairie Air*! This

free, pure pulsating *Prairie Air*! Full and deep I breathed it. I inhaled it like nectar from Elysium, I actually drank its balsam in deep, long draughts as my chest rose and fell, rose and fell rhythmically. Aye, this was the "*Air of Liberty*", elating my being and creating an exquisite feeling of vigorous and rejoicing life.

This recital of my youthful experience may pass as an introduction to the following story of the Catskills which inspired me by this same "*Air of Liberty*" that, years ago, gladdened my soul.

* * * * *

On "Gray Ledge"

On a late August afternoon I took a lonely stroll along the forest path which leads to the big stone quarry in the rear of K.'s farm. I scaled the rocks and climbed upon a broad plateau, consisting of innumerable broken stone plates. This rock-hill is called "*Gray Ledge*" by the people of the neighborhood. From the height of this plateau I visioned an exhilarating panorama of wooded hills and meadowed valleys in undulating billows of colors, of the softly contoured *Catskill Mountains* in the West, with a glimpse of the *Ashokan Reservoir* at the foot of *Overlook Mountain*.

On this plateau the mountain breezes, in passing, playfully weave the charm of their chants around the listener, or in stronger and more insistent tunes, the wild free winds of heaven whiz and toss your curls about (if you have any), color your cheeks with the glow of health, whistle into your ears the pilgrim tales of their far journeys into the mystery of the distance and sing to you in chorus the enticing songs of the "*Air of Liberty*". Here, on this wilderness airie, peace reigns supreme, rest invites you for which you longed, and life pulses and throbs around you with a still but compelling force, which makes you sense the presence of the "*Great Spirit*" to whom the Indians paid reverence, whom the Jews name "*Jehovah*", to whom the Christians pray as "*God*", "*The Lord*", the Turks as "*Allah*", the Japanese as "*Buddah*". Here you feel the spirit-touch of the "*Unfathomable One*", the powerful "*World Will*", whom even the honest Free-thinker does not deny, of

"Him" whose riddles and secrets no human soul can solve, of "Him", who simply is, as the Psalmist sings, and to whose praise the Irish bard *Thomas Moore* has struck the harp-chords so beautifully in his sacred song

"Thou Art, O God"

Thou art, o God, the life and light
of all this wondrous world we see;
its glow by day, its smile by night,
are but reflections caught from thee;
where'er we turn, thy glories shine,
and all things fair and bright are thine.

When day, with farewell beam, delays
among the opening clouds of even,
and we can almost think we gaze
thru golden vistas into heaven,
those hues, that make the sun's decline
so soft, so radiant, Lord! are thine.

When night, with wings of starry gloom,
o'ershadows all the earth and skies,
like some dark, beauteous bird, whose
plume
is sparkling with unnumbered eyes,
that sacred gloom, those fires divine,
so grand, so countless, Lord! are thine.

When youthful spring around us
breathes,
thy spirit warms her fragrant sigh;
and every flower the summer wreathes
is born beneath thy kindling eye.
Where'er we turn, thy glories shine,
and all things fair and bright are thine.



In the realms of such thoughts as these of Thomas Moore, time and space disappear before the shine of the *Inner Light*, and the soul of man becomes gifted to look with a seer's power into unlimited spaces of most wonderful heavens.

Towards the West the *Sun* slowly sank in a mellow sea of gold. As the Sun King, with a last benign look, was about to depart, the floating clouds set a crown of purple roses above his glowing brow, upon his flaming curls.

Smilingly, high from the shining clouds, the soul-giving *Ether*, the kind *Spirit Father*, with "good-night" wishes bent himself down to the great tired child, the Earth. His words of blessing whispered softly in the breezes, stirred lightly the leaves and grasses and rang out in the songs of some wood thrushes or bellbirds which, in the fading glory of the sky, perched on the topmost branches of tall hemlocks, hickorys and pines in the forest below me. As I turned, homeward bound, their singing was as the playing of a learned and lonesome musician who in a secluded old church renders on the organ a hymn of *Perfect Love*.



The Woodwoomly

Story of the Catskills, No. 5
By Wm. Benignus

Talking of elves, fays or fairies, who are sprites of the fields and woods, spirits of the earth and air, I believe that many of them reside on every hill and mountain - farm of the Catskills. Most of these strange beings are good-natured and do nobody harm, on the contrary, they do good turns to the people on the places where they live and find their own pleasures therein.

The sprites have homes, altho these homes are different from those in which men dwell, and seldom privileged humans are allowed by the fairies themselves to discover and behold the sprite homes and fairy-palaces.

They have their homes, these sprites, as men have and as even the wild animals have, such as rabbits, foxes, woodchucks, deers; and as the birds have, such as sparrows, bluebirds, wrens, robins, thrushes and others. Sprites do not stray far from the homes of their selection. The same as birds. Birds do not fly far away from their nests. For instance, the water fowl never leaves the pond or pool where it has built its nest, except when the time comes to change climate. The ever hungry hawks and owls, altho they fly long distances, seldom cross the border of the land which they can see from the tops of the trees on which their nests or perches are. Eagles and vultures cover in their flight immense distances to still their hunger and feed their young ones, but they always return home to their nests. Seabirds fly very far; farthest among them flies the Albatross, soaring on outspread powerful wings and following the ships over the foaming waves.

This instinct to have a home is in the breasts of us all. Birds go at it with a will. Watch the joyous voyagers in the spring, when they arrive from the South at the old places, which they remember so well. The first thing they do is to give vent to their feelings with ringing jublations. Then the mating birds settle down to business without waste of time and soon have their nest ready, very cozy and fitting their needs.

The same with us, or at least with most of us modern humans. We like to have a place which we can call peculiarly and intimately our own, where we can have things exactly as we like them and want them, a home which is our retreat, our castle, our paradise, a place which should be sacred to the guest.



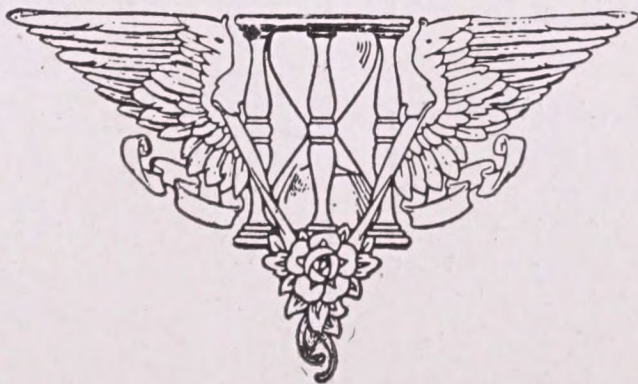
The kindly and goodnatured mountain sprite of "Sunbeam Brook Farm" also has a home on the farm. This sprite is a WOODWOOMLY. A Woodwoomly is a little fairy woman who makes the mountain woods her abode. Very few people ever see her. But you feel it sometimes that she is there after she has done you a good turn, as I felt it after a fierce rain- and thunderstorm which had raged on the place and in the neighborhood. After the storm had passed I went with Va, the farmer, to get drinking water at the well in the forest. The people around there call this well *The Good Well* because its water is so clear, cool and good. It wells up at the foot of a hill of stones which the quarrymen's engine has piled up there. Not far from it grows a tall swampberry bush, a natural landmark on the woodpath to the well. On the swampy ground many old hoary trees are standing. We filled our pails with water and brought it to the house. About 20 minutes later I went alone to the well to fetch another pail of drinking water, and there, right across the spot where we had dipped the water, a large tree had fallen, a forest giant. The top of it reached 10 feet over the well, the roots were at least 40 feet away straight in the opposite direction. There was no bark on the trunk, so old was the tree, but the wood was still very hard and solid. The old tree, loosened at the roots by the storm, had toppled over and crashed to the ground with its powerful weight, the while we were away. I guess it was *the sprite of the place, the Woodwoomly*, who prevented the tree from falling while we were dipping water at the well. The day after this happened, I helped the farmer to saw off the top

of the tree and to clear the place of the obstruction.

I met the *Woodwoomly* in the forest one summer afternoon. Going along a path where huckleberries grow profusely amongst the bushes in the direction of the quarry, I saw hobbling along towards me an old, bent, gray haired little woman. She walked with a hickory stick, clutched in her right hand as support. With the left hand she carried a willow - basket filled with big, fine huckleberries. "Good morning to you, good mother," I said, "you have very fine berries there." "The top o' the mornin to ye, me son. Yes, they be fine berries, sartinly," she said, "and win ye go pickin fer yerself, may ye find plenty of thim, an fine ones too. Wherever ye go, be ye blessed, me son." Hobbling away with her berries the little woman disappeared from my view behind the trees at the turn of the road and was gone.

The *Woodwoomly*, as I said, is a *fairy*. Therefore she has the power to appear in any shape she likes to, at her will. The second time that I saw her was in a clearing of the woods, on a warm quiet evening when the full moon rose brilliantly. She looked wondrously fair, the *Fairy Queen*. Her shimmering vestment was spun of fairy-silk and moonbeams. Her beautiful eyes shone kindly. She had a lovely face. Her rich hair fell over her white shoulders in long golden curls. On her head she wore a diadem of pearls with a large diamond whose rays blazed in all colors of the rainbow above her brow. She held in her hand a sceptre, on top of which a magical star gleamed with a soft bluish light. The Queen of the Fairies was seated on a magnificent throne in the reception room of her palace built of mountain - crystal and ornamented with precious stones. Sweet music floated thru the air. Seven rose- and lily-gardens adorned the fairy land-

scape around the castle. In each of the seven gardens a fountain splashed, showering glistening drops upon ferns and Blue Iris flowers, striking playfully the iridescent wings of quickly dashing dragon flies and the snowwhite bodies of waterfays who gamboled and chased each other merrily in the lively element. A crew of her sprites surrounded the queen, queer and quaint folks all, many of them with gaudy butterfly wings, some with dusky bat-wings. I saw there sprites of all kinds, goblins with little glowing eyes, gnomes that live in the rocks, root-manikins, who live under the roots and pump the sap up into the trees and plants, and will-o'-the-whisps from the swamps and moors who can dance the most original dances. Two of these will-o'-the-whisps stood as long blue flames, six feet high, on each side of the throne; the others danced around it, bending, twisting, rocking, jumping, two together, three together, a dozen together, advancing, dancing backward, advancing again with lightning-like rapidity, swaying and swirling in circles, standing still, soon growing small, then very tall, dancing high up as if shot from guns, then dancing down. They approached the Queen, bowed low before her and arranged themselves in a respectful distance around the throne. "Fairy Queen," I asked politely, "are you perhaps the good *Woodwoomly* whom I had the pleasure of meeting the other day on the path to the quarry?" "I am indeed, Poet, the *Woodwoomly*." —the Queen replied pleasantly—"It is easy for me to disguise myself and appear to you in any form I choose. But only children and dreamers can see me as *Fairy Queen*." "Pardon me for questioning you again", said I —"Are you always kind and good to folks?" "I am, and my subjects are," said the Fairy—"Yet only as long as you folks yourselves are kind and good to others and things of creation."



Man as Truth-Seeker, Riddle-Solver and Co-Worker with God, the Spirit



In my talks with the *Fairy Queen*, she revealed to me many secrets of Nature. I was curious to know by what agency, "forms" are created. She gave me this explanation: "You speak of *forms*, I try to make clear to you what "*form*" means by quoting the words of a sky-roamer, *Professor Edgar Lucien Larkin, Director of Mt. Lowe Observatory*—: "Consider the oak. It is a thought form. *Every space form is a thought form.* Every thought form is created by *Mind*. Mind preceded the life which was its agent for assembling the molecules around it to build the acorn. *Mind was first necessary to create a thought form of the tree.* This holds good for every living creature under the sun. For *Kapila* said in his mud hut over near the confluence of the Jumna and Ganges, many centuries before Christ, that *thought forms have been filled out by matter.* He was aware that *Mind thought first.* He said this in the intricate Samkhya system of philosophy.

Mind moves everything. You cannot raise your hand or make a movement without first thinking. *Mind was first.* *Mind is the base of all there is, of all that was, is and shall be.* We think by induction. *We are mind units of the "Infinite Mind".* We still have to learn how to use the latent powers within us, the remarkable powers of mentation, now latent. These mighty powers are sleeping in man, they await their awakening. The field of mind possibilities is still unexplored.

I have been projecting photographs of brain cells or nerve ganglia in brain tissues by high-power lenses on screens in my new science chambers to the complete astonishment of my classes and of myself. *These complexes of nerve fibres are the thrones of mind.* And the mind expressing therein has power to isolate and weigh one electron, next to the infinitely small, and weigh five billion

sun, some of them being two billion times larger than the earth. How mind functions in these minute centres of nerve radiation, and what mind is—these two are enigmas so completely inscrutable that mentalists are baffled; they cannot master one fact relating to either."

"Form," continued the Fairy, "is built by thought. Thought is expression of the mind. Mind, "*The Word*", was first, thinks first, creates. The Supreme Mind or the World Will is the creator of the Universes."

I asked the Fairy about the star on her sceptre. She spoke thus:

"This blue star consists of electrons, immeasurably small spheres in inconceivably rapid motion. Free electrons, not yet in revolution around each other to form atoms, may constitute the hypothetical ether. Your learned scientists have knowledge of this. Knowledge is power. To use knowledge rightly is another thing. You see my dancers, watchmen and body guards, the will-o'-the-wisps? They are never at rest, but are centres of motion. Nothing is at rest in Nature while light is radiating. Light eternally radiating, is eternal, is He, the Master." "Tell me, Fairy Queen," I queried, "by which magic of your wand do you produce things at your will and rule spirits? What is the nature of this power which you exercise?" "Poet," she replied, "to enlighten you I shall repeat part of a discourse of one of your wise men, whom I quoted before, *Professor Edgar Lucien Larkin*: "On the Ganges, India, in a small mud hut, Badarayana, the founder of Vedanta, said *matter is alive, - not inert.* In electricity positive and negative must be equal to establish equilibrium. Atoms known in their normal state are in equilibrium. Still an enigma of science is the positive electricity of atoms. Electrons are all negative and repel." —You query me upon the

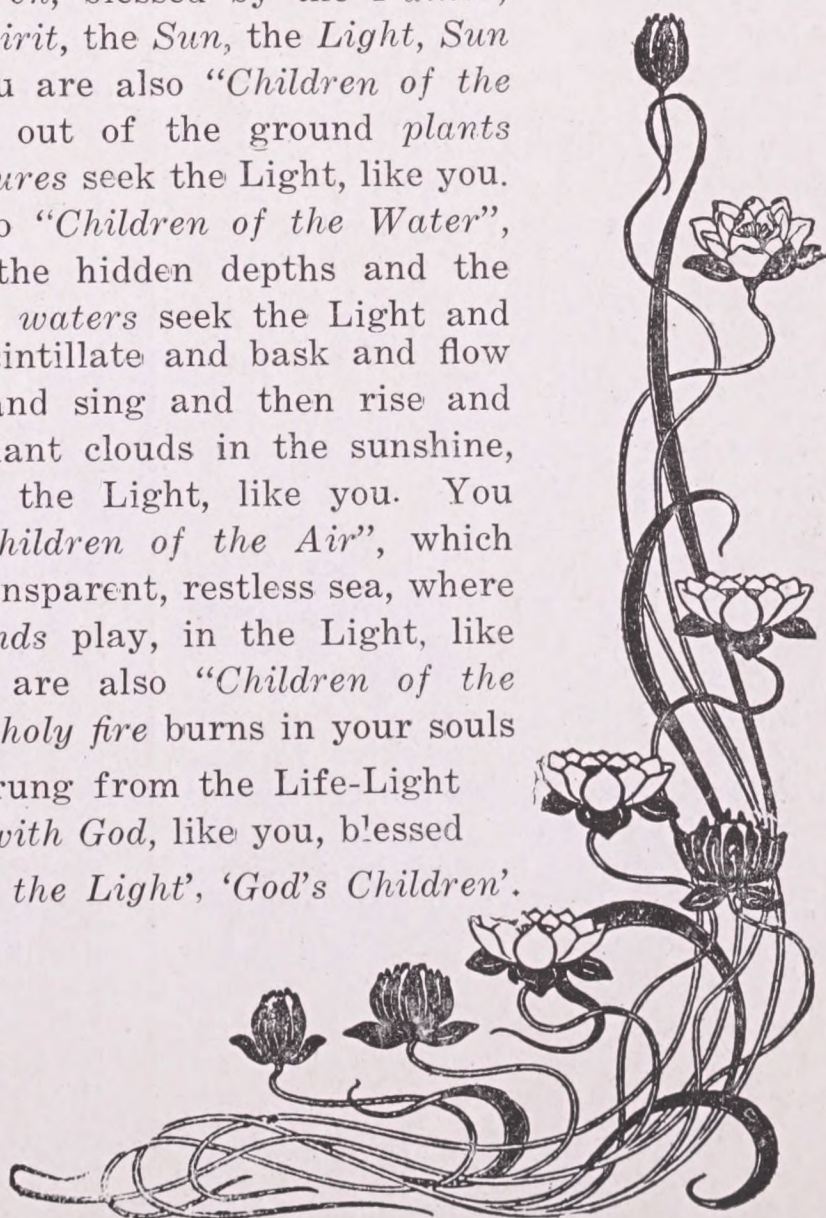
nature of my power. I shall try to make it comprehensible to you. In the first place it is my *will*, the will of my mind, which accomplishes and does things. Secondly: the magic at my command results from the action of controlled electro-magnetic waves upon which gravitation is depending. By proper *balance*, the *World Will* keeps the Universes going and in order. Another scientist, *Professor Nipher*, has made a very interesting experiment. By simply changing the electrical potential of bodies he makes their gravitational attraction upon

one another either vanish or become a repulsion at his will. Your chemists are boring at many riddles and are going to solve many. The dwellers on other stars are already making signals thru the ether to you. By and by you earth-men may bare world-old secrets of nature and have a better knowledge of the laws which govern the Universe, from the smallest atom to the largest sun. Then *Man*, as a *worker and creator*, in *co-work with the Infinite Mind*, forces matter to his will."



Children of the Light

Sun Children, blessed by the *Father*, the *Great Spirit*, the *Sun*, the *Light*, *Sun Children*, you are also "*Children of the Earth*", for out of the ground plants and all creatures seek the *Light*, like you. You are also "*Children of the Water*", for out of the hidden depths and the darkness the waters seek the *Light* and shine and scintillate and bask and flow and ripple and sing and then rise and sail as brilliant clouds in the sunshine, rejoicing in the *Light*, like you. You are also "*Children of the Air*", which glories, a transparent, restless sea, where the free winds play, in the *Light*, like you. You are also "*Children of the Fire*", for a holy fire burns in your souls a fire sprung from the *Life-Light* and one with *God*, like you, blessed '*Children of the Light*', '*God's Children*'.



October and November The Fall Woods

Story of the Catskills, No. 6
By Wm. Benignus

When Summer vanes the verdure-spirits of the mountains, hills and valleys slowly drop their white and gold embroidered emerald-garments and dress themselves pensively in the rich vestments of the year's ripeness. All of a sudden, by the magical touch of the Master-Artist Nature, the autumnal world flares up in a pageant of resplendent colors full of beauty and loveliness. It was heralded by the aster and the goldenrod, it is headed, when in full swing, by the hardiest and fairest of the seasons floral children, the queen of autumn flowers, the gorgeous chrysanthemum. This pageant in glowing tonality starts when the leaves begin to fall.

The Fall Woods! That means the open country. Suitably and warmly dressed one can enjoy it. It is a delight to go out into the open where the leave-twirlers blow, the free winds, where your soul, gazing, dives like an eagle into the clear depths of the blue ether, where the horizon widens and the sweep of the vast distances draws you onward. Be a little kind to yourself then, dweller of the big city, for you are a *Sun Child* by birth and right, you should live as a Sun Child in God's sunshine and in God's free air. Allow yourself to take a few days vacation. Leave behind you for a while the fretful cares of the day and fare out into the country to behold the magnificance of the Fall Woods. Go over to Staten Island. How beautiful its woods look! Or go to *Long Island*, ride about as far as Islip or Ronkonkoma Station; there *Ronkonkoma Lake*, deeply imbedded in a setting of sandy soil, glistens as a liquid sapphire in the midst of a forest of brilliantly leafed wonder-oaks. Journey up the North River, the Hudson, on one of the *Hudson River Day Line Steamers*, and admire the flamelike coloring of the Highland Woods. Take a short cut to the *Shawangunks* or to the *Catskills*, or make a longer trip to the *Adirondacks*, or cross the river to the eastern shore and visit the *Connecticut Mountains*. If your soul is not entirely sere you will join the bright Spirit of Autumn, soar with him

over forests and fields, with their lakes reflecting light and sky like jewels, with their rivers and brooks like silver ornaments, and the whole wide area replete with miracles.

When you return to life's whirlpool, to the city, to take part again in the rude competition and in the merciless, cruel grinding struggle for existence, you take home with you in the shrine of your remembrance revelations of healthy pleasures and pure joys which will gladden your heart during the long winter hours. Many say: "Life is too grim and hard, to let us think of other things than business. We have neither time nor money to take a vacation." True, these people may have eyes to see beauty too, and they may feel with warm hearts. In a way they are right. It cannot be denied that *the battle of life slowly cripples the soul*, and it is a fact that *poverty dwarfs, wrinkles and scars body and mind*, that it *crushes with heavy weight ideal endeavors, annihilates joyousness and very successfully clips the wings of the spirit*. But there are other people who only see the heights from below and never lift a foot to climb the mountains of beauty to reach *the height of light*. For these the reason of their stagnate composure is: laziness, stupidity and ignorance.

Stand upon a high prominence on a sunny day, *Child of the Light*, and let your gaze roam over the wonderland spread before you under the mellow autumn sky. Note in the vales and on the hills yonder the varied, but harmonious colors of the foliage. How the deep rich golden yellow of the maples glitters in the sunshine! The royal red, and the princely warm brown of the leaves of different kinds of oaks blaze like glimmering fires in broad stretches and patches. The vermilion and turkish red of the Sumach trees shows up remarkably prominent. Seen from afar the clumps of bushes and vines, of clematis, of poison ivy and Virginia creeper, twine like tendrils of tangled flames along the ground, cover rocks and rural

stone walls or creep up the trunks of trees. This intense display is softened by the perennial green of the needle-leaved trees and by bushes and shrubs with evergreen foliage.

Watch from your height among the hills the Fall Woods when the winds are blowing and are rocking the tree tops to and fro, to and fro like masts of ships in a gale. Look, how the nimble fingers of the wind ghosts turn the myriads of leaves incessantly. A rhythmically undulating *sea of leafage* flames up in all its tints and hues of yellow-gold, orange and lemon,—in all shades and variations of red,—crimson, scarlet, coral, ruby, russet and burgundy. Radiating light, it springs into motion, heaves up

and down, sinks and rises, and billows away gloriously.

When the winds settle and the Fall Woods come to rest and lay still, as in meditation, their beauty is comparable to a glowing sunset at sea of queenly rose, imperial purple and gold.

There is endless variation and action in this *autumnal Drama of Nature*. There is soul-lifting music in this grand color-symphony of the Fall Woods. Their flaming farewell flashes to men a promise of reawakening and renewal when the cycle of the year has swung around again to Spring.

New York City, November 1917.

The American Bluebird's Lay

A Song of the Sunny Seasons

By Wm. Benignus

At my hut's door near to me
rush of wings I heard.
I looked, what it might be—
a pretty little s k y - blue bird.

The wind of the gentle spring,
which adorns with bloom the land
when cold icicles no more cling,
brought it with friendly hand.

Upon a pole at rest
sat the bluebird, so blithe and gay.
Red was the singer's breast,
lovely sounded its lay:

“Dear, dear, think of it.”

Oh beautiful summer time!
We floated with Love along,
each day was a happy rhyme,
w o r k was made pleasant by s o n g.

The bluebirds then built a nest,
soon chirruped their fledglings near.
The male until late harvest
its song sang of sweetest cheer.

But when the wild winds of fall
shook sharply the swaying trees,
robbed roughly of leaves them all,
it sang as a “Goodbye” this:

“Far away, far away.”

Set to music for songvoice and piano by Eugen Haile.

American Singers

Robin Redbreast, Redwinged Blackbird, Bobolink, Yellow-throated Vireo, Wood Thrush or Bellbird, Starling, Finch, Bluebird.
Songs and Lays. — by Wm. Benignus

Robin Redbreast's Call

When the woods and the fields, still stiff
from frost,
are waiting for Winter to give up the
ghost,
then comes Robin Redbreast, carrols
about,
fills the air with its song, so merry and
loud:

"Never give up!
Cheer up! Cheer up!
Never give up!
Cheerily! Cheerily! Cheerily!
Cheerily! Cheerily!
Cheer up! Cheer up!
Never give up!
Cheer up! Cheerily! Cheerily! Cheer up."

And the woods awake and the fields
around,
the grasses and flowers peep up from
the ground,
and the birds all come and the butter-
flies all,
when Robin Redbreast sends out his call:
"Cheer up! Cheer up!
Never give up!
Cheer up! Cheerily! Cheerily! Cheer up."



"Kong-quer-ree!"

When the Redwinged Blackbirds travel northward
A Spring Lay. — By Wm. Benignus

Strong March-winds with fierce, frosty
breath
across the land are sweeping,
and, tarrying, some young buds yet
dew up, with cautious peeping.

Then northward in long, waving streams
the redwinged blackbirds travel,
flock following flock. Their air-call
seems:
brooks, singing over gravel.

Where swamp-woods grow and reeds
abound
they stop, they are at home here.
Their spring-call with its gladsome sound
the world round fills with home-cheer:

"Kong-quer-ree!
Kong-quer-ree!"

Bobolink

The journey was long from the sunny
south,
now, singer, you are at home;
all danger has passed, with peace about
down settle you, cease to roam:

"Tink!
Bobolink! Bobolink!"

So boundless your joy! With willing
mate
you select a pond-tree tall
to build a nest, and from morn till late
you sing your rollicking call:

"Tink!
Bobolink! Bobolink!"



Yellow-Throated Vireo

Sweet-voiced bird with the yellow throat,
returning to us from the South's abode
in the month of May,
over summer to stay,
deeply and richly so sing you,
softly you sing and dreamily too:

"See me!
I'm here!
Where are you?"



Wood Thrush or Bellbird

Lay: "A-e-o! A-e-o-lee! A-e-o-lee-ee!"

The bellbirds song above the woodland-
dell
rings out with sounds of sonorous golden
bell,
so sweet, that life's loud turmoil they
abate
and chase away unholy strife and hate.
The soul the sunset's glorious wonders
drinks,
and dove-winged peace with benediction
sinks
to Earth down softly, brings this gift,
the best:
Night's strengthening sleep and dream-
less, blessed rest.

I heard a little bluebird sing

Set to music for songvoice and piano
by Adalbert Schöler



I heard a little bluebird, singing
it sat upon a spray in bloom;
of Spring it was a message bringing
that chased away the winter's gloom.
The song so sweet heralded May,
when Love it's sceptre is swinging,
it made my heart so glad and gay,
deep joy and bliss was bringing
the bluebird's lay that day.



Song of the Starling

"Ho-ho! Hoihee-heeo!"



The Pear Tree

Set to music for songvoice and piano
by Eduard Herrmann.



There stood on the green, a-blooming in
May,

a pear tree, so snow-white it shone,
and many a time I wended my way
thereto with my sweetheart alone.

A starling high up was whistling its best,
as if this life were but a play;
the singer's mate hatched eggs in the
nest,
no wonder he whistled so cheerful and
gay.

Oh, many a time in the midst of life's
noise

I dream of the tree on the Green,
the starling I hear, its jubilant voice—
where are the glad times that have been?

Song of Spring

Set to music for songvoice and piano
by Eugen Haile.



When the young Spring's breeze begins
to sing,
silver bells with sweetest love-notes ring,
when the robin whistles from the tree,
then does Life awake and shout with
glee.

Golden wings it spreads and flies away
into worlds of wonders, beckoning gay,
into sunshine-countries, happy, free.
O glad Life, I shall your comrade be!



Two finches on a fir-tree bough

Set to music for songvoice and piano
by Eduard Herrmann.



Sit two finches high on a fir-tree bough,
have forgot the world in sweet love's
glow;
closely, breast to breast, sits the dream-
ing pair
in the woods, so still in summer air.

And a wand'rer thinks, with his heart
at ache,
how so fair sweet love the world can
make;
he can ne'er forget yon gone summer
day
and the woods asleep in twilight's play.



The Song of the Bubbling Brook

By Wm. Benignus



A bonnie lassie my heart had won,
she came from my native country, my own;
her eyes were so sunny, so rich her curls,
the loveliest was she of all the girls;
aye, she sang like a lusty, bubbling brook,
her entrancing smile the hearts captive took.

She was a fairy with dancing feet;
she was my souls queen, so bright and sweet.
Where is my queen now, with beauty blessed?
Alas, my sweetheart has gone to rest.

And over her, forming a blossom-bower,
red roses send forth a perfume-shower.

Blow gently, gently, warm summer wind,
and touch this sod with caresses kind;
your sweetest of melodies, loud and clear,
in the golden sunshine fling, birdies, here,
and send her a greeting to heaven above.
Good night, gold-heart! Sleep softly, my love.



The Sleeping Mountain Giant

By Wm. Benignus

The Giant dreams in a deep, deep sleep
of times that have long, long been;
while on his outstretched body steep
the woods grow, dark and green.

And while he dreams of the times of yore,
of a love which he tries to find,
a cloud woman from sky's dark shore
soars up in a mighty wind.

Draws nigh, comes close and bends her down
to the sleeping Giant's head;
her trailing tresses of sombre brown
sweep the sleeping Giant's bed.

And she kisses him like a seething flame,
by the lightning's blue-white flare,
while the thunders roar and the Giant's frame
doth quake neath her fiery stare.

Aye, he seems to stir and he seems to sigh,
as if from his sleep he'd wake,
his wild cloud-love, he feels so nigh,
in his Titan arms to take.

But with showers of tears she wanes and dies
in a storm of blinding rain,
while the Mountain Giant shakes and sighs
and falls to sleep again.

The sun appears in radiance fair,
sends down his golden beams,
while, stretched full length in God's free air,
the Giant sleeps and dreams.

Note:—The *Sleeping Mountain Giant* is also called the *Man in the Mountain*. If you travel by steamer up or down the Hudson, the best view of the Mountain Giant is obtained between Germantown Station and Germantown Dock, three miles to the north, and below Kingston. He can be traced by the following outlines: The peak to the south is the knee, the next to the north is the breast, and two or three above this is the chin, the nose and the forehead.

Another Sleeping Mountain Giant is *The Sleeping Mountain Giant of Mount Carmel*, near New Haven, Conn.

The Isle of Regret

By Wm. Benignus

On wings of thought I sailed away,
and soon I came to reach
a wonder isle, which glistening lay
with crescent silver-beach.

The sea, a dream of ultramarine,
lay waiting, longing fain
to embrace the sky of mild carmine
which mirrored in the main.

A soft breeze blew and kissed the sand,
then flew up to the trees
of this lone isle, this spirit land,
which but the seer sees.

From bowers of leaves the evening dew
like drops of diamonds fell,
sweet-throated birds of rainbow hue
gave sound like golden bell.

Gigantic rose an orange-moon
where sky and water met,
strange shadows, each a mystic rune,
their weaving magic spread.

On towering rock, lapped by the tide,
built of white marble stone,
with bastions broad and portals wide
a splendid castle shone.

The portals opened, in a row,
while down the full moon smiled,
in measured thread with whispers low
a spirit company filed.

Above them, like a black threat soars,
which from the abyss sped,
flew round and round with croakings hoarse
the demons of regret.

In never-ceasing, tireless flight
they followed like a curse.
The spirits sang, as lost souls might,
a song of vain remorse.

Full strong a proud, majestic one
struck on a harp a chord,
which rose, a flaming orison,
to God, the highest Lord.

Thru silver-clouds His face gleamed out,
the Lord's o'er life and death,
in glory His still face gleamed out.
He spoke with tempest's breath.

'The words His Voice was speaking there
the prophet well may tell,
for hopes it gav, where none first were,
and lifted up from hell.

The Words of the Voice

"Thou didst not see my high design,
thou didst not fathom me,
thou hadst no trust in me,
thou didst loose courage, didst destroy
the work of me and thee.

For I am the Lord of Earth and Heaven,
for I am Love and Light.
Spirit, rejoice! I break thy chains.
Be free from vain regrets and pains!
Once more I give thee power of wings
to soar to my clear heights."

* * * * *

"Break the chains, which bind you, asunder,
the chains of perpetual regret,
be not laggards, but Children of Thunder,
and my Battelers brave instead.

Seek the Light like the flowers vernal
which rise full of faith from the sod.
Advice ask of me, the Eternal,
the Loving and Living God."

This Life is like a Theatre-Play

This life is like a theatre-play,
a change of joy and sorrow:
the fellow who is up to-day
is likely down tomorrow;
the one who walks on thorny road
or lives in a lowly Ganges hut,
may walk on rose-strewn pathways still
and dwell in a palace on dreamland-hill.



Purple and Gold

On the Steamer "Chester W. Chapin",
nearing New Haven, Conn.,
Sept. 26, 1916.



Purple and gold the Sun sinks down,
splenderous clouds his glorious crown;
under a shining violet-sky
softly the waves of the Ocean sigh.

Dark grows the depth and dark grows the height,
gemmed with dreams comes the velvet night,
bright with hope from far heaven's bars
sparkle the jewels of God, the Stars.

Wm. Benignus

Shawangunk

Storm Song

Far behind I leave thy harms
 musty city, hoarse with noise,
 joyously I spread my arms,
 O Sun, to thy light! to Freedom, my choice!

Mountain Forest, organs peal,
 echoes answer, thousands strong,
 when, wind-swept, thy tree-tops reel—
 I list to thy song! I list to thy song!

Stormwind, singing in the height
 gloriously, divinely, free,
 with a voice of giant might,
 I accompany thee, I accompany thee!

Wm. Benignus



The Shawangunk Mountains and

"Shawangunk Mountain Stories"

Ahead of these, "Catskill Mountain Stories" I published, 1916, seven stories of the Shawangunk Mountains, a mountain range lying south of the Catskill Range and separated from it by the valley of the Rondout Creek and Sandburg Creek. These seven stories I collected under the title "*Shawangunk Mountain Stories*." The well-known Poet and Author, Historian, Collector and Recorder of Legends and Folk-Lore of Central Pennsylvania and the Pennsylvania Mountains, Col. Henry W. Shoemaker, wrote about these Shawangunk Stories ("Altoona Tribune", Sept. 1, 1916): "Nature fashions her masterworks faultlessly. Religion can be taught by the study of the wonders of nature, of scenes that are an inspiration to human souls."

The movement to preserve the old time legends and tales of our mountains seems to be spreading in various directions.

Recently *W. Benignus*, a New York poet, has issued an attractive volume entitled "*Shawangunk Mountain Stories*". These stories were collected in the Shawangunk Mountains in New York state and all of them are intensely interesting and novel.

Mr. Benignus is to be congratulated for his work in securing these old tales before they were lost in oblivion. Some of them obviously bear the touch of Mr. Benignus' own genius, but the foundation of all of them comes down from Indian days. In addition to their value as folk-lore, a collection of tales of this kind has an added purpose in creating an interest in natural scenery. The places described in such a book are bound to be sought out by nature lovers, and in this way each locality will become possessed of a coterie of staunch friends."

The Spirit Lake



ON the "Shawangunk Mountains" is a lake where every twenty-five years on a certain summer night a ghostly procession of spirits can be seen by privileged eyes. The full moon sheds its silvery light, strange and fantastic shadows weave and waver, the winds are hushed and silent, the mirror of the lake is smooth and motionless while the spirits walk around the shimmering waters three times and whisper and sigh and sing softly. If you listen closely you can hear them sing this

SONG OF LOST LOVE

"True love flows deep as a river flows, but love means many a thing!

It can be compared to a floating rose which the waves to the deep sea swing.

"Love leads you sometimes to sunlit skies where in glory redeemed souls dwell;

it brings you to regions where pain-wrung cries of lost souls ring through hell.

"The dewdrop trembles, a sparkling gem, in the purple flower's chalice,

and a sunbeam, which from heaven came, drinks it hotly—that's love!—with a kiss.

"But the love that alone will a long time last I compare to a crystal lake,

wherein purest pearls of a happy past their rest at the bottom take.

"And a shimmer deep down from its golden sands meets fondly the soft moonbeams,

while with lilies white in their spirit hands on the shore walk our wishes and dreams.

"And their eyes are turned with a sudden start to the treasures there, hidden long,

and they sing, with sighs that could break your heart, of lost love a sad, sad song."

The Might of the Hudson

Born in the lofty mountains
from crystal springs, to run
as bournes, where trouts are playing,
as cascades, that pearl in the sun,
forming lakes that lie dreaming
in solitudes of the height,
the young *Hudson* is rocking
its waters, clear and bright.

Thru flowering valleys
the gentle stream is led,
a warrior in the *Highlands*
he cuts his rocky bed—
where the songs of thrushes
ring like golden bells
in the mellow evenings
over the hills and dells;
where rich berries ripen,
where fine cherries grow,
where in laden orchards
grapes and peaches glow.

A high wall rises abruptly,
the towering *Palisades*,
a longing seizes the river
to go where the sea-mist fades.
The Hudson broadens his waters
in solemn mightiness,
he greets in his grand passing
New York, the giantess,
reaches the bay, the gateway—
fulfilled the heart's behest,
in the *Atlantic's* bosom
the Strong One finds his rest.

Wm. Benignus



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